

Cargo

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Cargo

by [TigerPrawn](#)

Summary

An unexpected reunion leads to a long desired union.

Notes

NB: This is from the prompt fill below, but I missed the mark on some of it, sorry!

Nigel/Aiden: Seafaring Captain meets a Childhood Friend/Foe at the Spring Fayre but Fake
Date



Nigel groaned as he lay back on the bed and sank into the overstuffed mattress.

Normally he'd never say that he'd been at sea too long, but he really fucking had this time. A long haul of deliveries back and forth across the Black Sea with no time to stop.

He wasn't part of any guilds and not working for any of the shipping companies. Not that many of them bothered with the Black Sea when they had the transatlantic trade routes to enjoy in their big ships. He simply pressed coin into the right palms to ensure the security of his business, small as he was, and sometimes that meant doing work for them too. He didn't mind it, smuggling was just as honest work as anything else as far as he was concerned.

The last of his illicit cargo had been dropped and so he had made for Constanța to take a few days ashore, gather supplies and the like.

It was worth it for the money he'd made, enough, he hoped to fix up his cabin a little. His bunk was little more than glorified slats at this point. He'd been so packed with cargo that it was everywhere and he had to take down his hammock.

The last time his bunk had been comfortable had been when his cargo had actually been two persons smuggling themselves out of Varna. A young couple driven to run or be torn apart by their families. Nigel had scoffed at the time, but over the few days together he bedded both the man and the woman, and twice had them both at the same time.

Whilst he could not complain then, it had served to hasten the deterioration of his sleeping area.

Thinking about the young lovers, Nigel bit at his lower lip and began to wander his hand down to his britches. A nice wank and then a nap would be perfect.

As he started to pull at the laces of his britches there was a knock at his door. Nigel huffed, squeezing his eyes shut. But when there was another knock, Nigel couldn't ignore it. He rose and went to the door.

"What?" He snarled as he opened it.

The large, indignant looking man the other side of the door went wide eyed and stumbled back.

"There is no need for that tone, sir." He grumbled.

Nigel raised a brow. "You just raised me from my bed. What is your business?"

With a scowl the man continued, "I am looking for my son."

"Well, I'm the only fucking person here and I'm not your son," Nigel replied coolly and then shut the door.

He heard the man bustle for a moment and then leave.

The mood ruined, Nigel went back to the bed for his nap.

It was an hour later when Nigel's stomach woke him for lunch. He washed up and went down to the tavern that sat beneath the inn. The food smelled good just for the fact that it wasn't biscuits and salted fish.

Though when he got there he discovered that the smell wasn't from the tavern at all, but from a market place outside set up for spring festivities. Curiosity piqued, Nigel took himself to the spring fayre, wandering around to see the wares and games. It was a hive of activity.

Nigel found somewhere to buy food and enjoyed eating the roll of cooked meat as he continued his wandering.

Not his usual sort of interest, but it was nice to be reminded that there was more to existence than going back and forth on a boat. Jostling through the crowd and seeing what life was like

on land was both intriguing and reassuring that he was better off at sea.

There was no denying he loved sailing, but it made you forget there were other people doing other things, other ways to live. Almost like being in a world of his own.

Nigel was lost in these thoughts, when a hand slipped through his arm, resting in the crook of it.

Before he even had a chance to look, a gentle, feminine voice spoke. A familiar one.

“What chance to find a friendly face here,” The young woman said.

Nigel went to stop but she tugged his arm.

“Keep walking. Pretend we are together.” She muttered but then let out a tinkle of laughter as though he had said something to amuse her.

Nigel frowned and stole a glance at her as she steered them both back towards the inn and away from the noise of the fayre.

“Gabrielle?”

She gave a slight nod and he allowed the woman he had not seen since they were practically both children, to lead him into the inn.

Once out of the public view, standing in the small alcove by the stairs that led up to the bedrooms upstairs, Gabrielle pulled him out of sight.

“Thank goodness. I can’t believe the fortune,” Gabrielle let out a breath of relief as she spoke.

“Are you in danger?” Nigel asked automatically.

“Not I. No. Quick,” She waved for him to follow along the corridor that Nigel was sure was meant for staff. At a non-descript door she stopped and gave a short rap on the wood. “It’s me, she whispered against the wood.”

There was the slide of a bolt, the door opened and Gabrielle pulled him into the small room.

In fact, it was not a room but a large cupboard, a larder. This became apparent when all three occupants were pressed together amongst shelves of cheese.

“What is going on?” Nigel asked, completely off kilter. All this after months of being at sea? This wasn’t the sort of excitement he was used to nor wanted.

He had planned to simply send for a whore and spend an enjoyable few days in port. He had not expected to see his childhood friend.

Gabrielle turned to him, taking hold of his arms and assessing him sternly.

“I am trusting you with a life here.” She said, to which Nigel narrowed his eyes but frowned. Apparently satisfied, Gabrielle began.

“Do you recall my friend, growing up in Bucharest together? The innocent fun and frolics we had as children? We were blessed in many ways. Do you also remember Aiden Galvin?”

Gabrielle looked to the third person in the cupboard, a harried looking young man who looked like he might cry or lash out in anger, Nigel was unsure which.

Nigel shrugged and made a non-committal noise.

He did remember the boy, a little brat that Gabrielle’s family had taken in. He had been a stowaway on a ship from the Americas and ended up in Romania. It was amazing the little shit hadn’t gotten himself killed. Probably would have if he hadn’t stolen so much coin from his father’s purse. Some military commander Nigel recalled, he probably didn’t even notice his kid was gone at first.

Fortunately for the kid, Gabrielle’s family were just as soft on hard luck cases as she was. So it hadn’t been a surprise they’d taken in this wayward American boy. It was a surprise how much he had then featured in Gabrielle’s life. Like a little brother she had always wanted. They were practically inseparable. She taught him Romanian and the time she had once spent with Nigel was now devoted to the boy she saw as her ward.

It wasn’t jealousy.

He had missed seeing so much of Gabrielle, but they were growing up and becoming working adults. Childhoods long gone. He always knew he’d see less and less of her, but that hadn’t mattered, he had always planned to marry her anyway.

If he had to take a woman then it had better be one who knew and understood him as well as she did.

But Aiden had destroyed all that. And he couldn’t even begin to pretend that it was because of how he consumed so much of her time that Nigel once had. As the boy had grown, made worth for himself, Nigel had found him less annoying, less brattish.

Looking at him now, Nigel remembered those youthful feelings he’d had. Feelings that he had hidden beneath cruelty and rudeness towards the boy.

Aiden’s eyes met his and Nigel felt his heart thump. He had always been so beautiful and age had not changed that.

“My father has tracked me down,” Aiden spoke softly. “He cares not for me of course, he had thought me dead from what has been made known. Now he knows that I live his wounded pride demands that I be discovered and repay the money I stole from him.”

Aiden looked so small as he spoke. And Nigel had seen it in others that he had smuggled along with his cargo here and there. Escaping from family or lovers that beat them or worse.

“He was going door to door, he found our room,” Gabrielle continued, “We were able to climb out of the window before he saw us, but we cannot go back there and now we have missed the boat we had booked Aiden passage on.”

“What do you want from me?” Nigel replied, gruff words and a sour expression, not wanting to show that his heart went out to them. To Aiden.

Gabrielle looked at him pleadingly, whilst Aiden’s gaze turned steely. As petulant as he had been as a child, not that Nigel hadn’t deserved that reaction from him.

“Can we at least come to your room? Hide there until we are able to make more arrangements?” She asked.

Nigel grunted and let himself back out of the storeroom. He stood there and let out a sigh before looking at them and gesturing with his head.

“Come on then.”

They silently and swiftly made their way up to Nigel’s room and he closed the door securely behind them.

“I had planned to stay a few days before I am set to pick up more cargo to take down to Istanbul.” Nigel informed them before turning back at them and gesturing at the bed that could only reasonably sleep two. “This is the only bed.”

“You’re a sailor now?” Gabrielle smiled.

“I have my own boat, I make a living delivering cargo around the Black Sea.” Nigel said as he took a seat at the small wooden table next to the window. He took his tobacco pouch from his pocket and began to prepare his pipe.

Gabrielle took the other seat whilst Aiden stood. Just stood and looked as though he had no idea what to do with himself.

“I cannot stay,” Gabrielle said. “My father is expecting me to return today. If I leave soon I should still make it before dark.” She considered for a moment before continuing. “Aiden needs passage on a boat. We have money, can you take him?”

Nigel cocked a brow at that, putting the end of his pipe to his lips and striking a match. He studied them both intently as he lit the pipe and sucked on it for a moment.

“I’m not looking for trouble.”

“And there will not be any. Our plan had been to get Aiden as far as Istanbul, and then he could make his way into Europe. Disappear again so that his father can never find him.” There was a sadness in her words, the inevitability that it meant she would never see the boy she considered a brother ever again. The world was a big place.

“I was looking forward to a few days ashore,” Nigel grumbled, finding himself unable to outright deny the request.

“And you can still enjoy those. Just allow Aiden to hide here and then take him with you when you go.” Gabrielle asked as sweetly as she’d ever asked for anything when they were children.

Nigel huffed. But then he gave a curt nod.

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It was the middle of the night when they were woken by a banging on the door.

It took Nigel a moment to realise where he was. That the body in the bed next to him was Aiden.

They had barely spoken once they had said their goodbyes to Gabrielle, other than for Aiden to offer to sleep in a chair. At which Nigel had been compelled to make an off hand comment about him being too scared to share a bed with a man. Rebelling against the words as Nigel had considered he might from what he remembered of him, Aiden had settled in the bed next to him, atop the blankets.

There was another loud bang and Nigel rolled from the bed and staggered to the door. He looked back to the bed to see Aiden sliding off and taking refuge behind the bed, before he opened the door.

It was the same man from earlier in the day, and this time with the landlord beside him.

“I am looking for my son.” The words were a demand.

“We’ll, I ain’t your fucking son and I’m here all alone.” Nigel growled in response.

“I’ve had my men watching this building all day and he has not left. Someone is harbouring him. I demand you let me search your room.” The man barked out the words, like a fucking bully. Nigel knew the type. And there was no fucking way he was capitulating.

Nigel looked at the landlord, wondering if he was condoning or had simply been bullied into this. He spoke to the man nonetheless.

“When I paid you good coin for this room I hadn’t expected to be harassed out of my bed. Is this good for business?”

The landlord blanched, “Perhaps, in the morning,” he started.

Aiden’s father continued to glare at Nigel but he stood his ground. Making sure to take a breath and puff out his chest. If this was going to get physical, he wouldn’t be the one coming off worse.

“Fine.” The man agreed in a petulant way that might have reminded Nigel of Aiden if there wasn’t such cruelty laced with it.

“Fine.” Nigel replied and slammed the door in the man’s face.

He stood there and listened, making sure he heard retreating footsteps and then banging on the next room before he went back to the bed.

Nigel moved around it quickly and found Aiden practically curled into a ball as he sat there rocking.

“Aiden,” Nigel said softly, his jaw tightening at how scared the young man was.

“I didn’t just steal his money,” Aiden said quietly. “I never... I never told anyone. I didn’t want people to think ill of me.”

“It doesn’t matter now.” Nigel said, standing and grabbing the bag that seemed to contain Aiden’s life. He threw it onto the bed and began to collect his own few things together, having brought little from the boat. “We need to leave now. We’ll drop out the window and make for my boat. If anyone follows us we can lose them around the fayre stalls.”

Nigel put everything in his own small bag and then looked to see Aiden still sat there.

“He’s going to kill me if he finds me.” Aiden muttered, so much fear there that Nigel wanted to fucking pull the kid into his arms and comfort him.

Nigel cleared his throat, “He has to find you first, come on.” He took hold of Aiden’s arm and dragged him to his feet. Nigel opened the window and threw out their bags into the street below before gesturing for Aiden to go next.

It took only moments for them to drop down and grab their bags. A moment more to lose themselves amongst the now closed stalls.

They crouched behind them and looked around to see if they had been seen or followed.

“It looks clear.” Nigel said before starting off, expecting Aiden to follow him, which he did.

They were almost at the moorings where Nigel’s boat would be found when they heard commotion behind them. Men following, running, his father at the rear.

Nigel took hold of Aiden’s hand, worried the boy would freeze again, and then practically threw him onto the deck when they reached the boat.

“Get below.” Nigel commanded as he began to loosen the moorings, the men almost upon them.

“Wait! I will have justice!” Aiden’s father bellowed.

Nigel glanced over to see Aiden frozen with fear, shaking as he watched his father gain on them. But Nigel was determined not to let the man have him.

This sweet, bratty boy who had worn his pain in such a way that had endeared Gabrielle and her family, and entranced Nigel. All those years of snipping and growling at each other when all he’d ever wanted to do was protect him. Instead he had put a distance between them, and with Gabrielle too. That had all been on him.

Now was his chance to protect Aiden as he'd always hoped to.

The boat unmoored, Nigel pushed them from the dock.

They were almost out of reach when one of the men jumped. He made the leap into the boat, musket in hand, and collided with Nigel.

Had Nigel not seen him coming it might have knocked him off his feet, but instead he grabbed the musket and they grappled. An oversight the man realised, having to go hand to hand now.

Even so the man tried to pull up his musket and Nigel grabbed for it again, swinging the man by it until he was against the side of the boat. It would take little to push him over the side now, and he clearly looked as though he wondered why this had not happened, why Nigel still held the barrel of the musket.

Nigel looked at the dock they were still drifting away from, then back to the man. He moved forward, struggling with him once more, looking at the docks, and then he disarmed the man.

The sound of the musket fire echoed around the quiet docks, and left Nigel's ears ringing for how close it had been. Even so he could hear Aiden gasp.

The man on his boat looked confused, but then Nigel pushed the musket against him and he reeled backwards into the water, leaving him to swim back to the docks.

Looking back at the docks, Aiden's father dropped to his knees and then slumped forward. And then, before any of his hired men could reach him, he fell forward into the water.

Nigel turned back to Aiden, visibly shaking as he watched his father sink.

Nigel wasted no time then in releasing the sail and steering them out into the sea. It was a steady wind, enough to take them from the scene behind them.

"They'll come after you." Aiden said, his eyes wide. It might not have been so clear from the dock but Aiden would have seen the way Nigel pressed his advantage and purposely aimed back at the dock, at Aiden's father.

Nigel shook his head. "I don't think so. See those men with him? They're mercenaries, and he'd have had to pay a tidy sum in advance. It's no skin off their nose. And they won't want to get any kind of authorities involved."

Aiden's face crumpled and then his body.

He was sobbing as he collapsed to the deck. Nigel quickly tied off the sail and went to him, crouching next to him.

"I just... don't know how I will ever thank you. You did something I had been unable to." Aiden muttered through his sobs.

“Shh,” Nigel tentatively patted Aiden’s shoulder, wanting to do so much more. “You could have, but sometimes we need someone else.”

At Nigel’s unintentionally soft words, Aiden looked at him with warm eyes.

*

Nigel sat looking out over the water as the sun rose.

He had put the weeping boy into the still unfixed bunk and set his course. Not to Istanbul but just a little way down the coast. He dropped the anchor a little off of Varna. When they were ready, the threat now gone, they could set back to Constanța. Aiden could go back to Bucharest and Nigel could collect the cargo that had been arranged.

It would be as though the last day had never happened.

But it had.

Nigel puffed on his pipe as he thought about the young man currently in his bunk. The way he slept so heavily in such an uncomfortable place made clear that it was the first night he had felt safe to really sleep in a long time. And that ignited something in Nigel.

With a heavy sigh Nigel went below to explain where they would go from here. He should be happy Aiden got to go back to Gabrielle and her family.

When he sat on the edge of the bunk, Aiden began to slowly stir.

“Nigel?” He asked tentatively, blinking his eyes open.

“It’s okay. Everything’s fine. I just wanted to let you know we’ll set back to Constanța soon, there’s no need to take you to Istanbul and I have to go back for my next job.”

Aiden nodded, and even so he looked hesitant.

When Nigel went to stand up, Aiden grabbed his arm and stopped him.

“Wait, I... Thank you. I mean, I can’t ever really thank you enough. I have never felt safe before, not since... before my mother died.”

“It’s fine.” Nigel replied, his heart rate picking up all the same at the soft skin against his own.

Aiden met his eyes and for a long moment they just gazed at each other.

“You hated me when I was young. Do you really not remember me?” Aiden sounded so hopeful.

“I never said I didn’t. I remember you.” Nigel offered. “You were a brat.”

Aiden chuckled at that, a little of his old self returning now that his fear had subsided.

“Only to you. Others found me charming.” Aiden said as he moved to sit up, not releasing his gentle hold on Nigel.

Nigel huffed a chuckle.

“You were far from charming.” Nigel teased, though he had been charmed all the same. He wasn’t sure if he’d have been able to resist the young man had he not been such a brat.

“I guess I was... scared. Of letting myself like you. I arrived there with a chip on my shoulder and yet it was still there when I was around you. I admired you.” Aiden said quietly. And there was something in the way that Aiden said *admired* that made him think it was more than just a young boy looking up to one of the older children.

Understandably Aiden wasn’t going to voice that. Not unless Nigel made clear it was safe for him to do so.

“If you had tried to charm me,” Nigel started, his breathing a little shallow and a stirring in his nethers that he was unable to ignore, “I would have been unable to resist you.”

Aiden drew in a sharp breath at that and swallowed.

Their eyes fixed on each other, Nigel wasn’t sure which of them leaned in first, but the next he knew, they were kissing passionately.

Aiden moaned into his mouth, and uncomfortable bunk be damned, Nigel was pushing the boy down and crawling over him.

They were both instantly hard, their bodies rutting together as they kissed, rocking against each other with the aid of the motion of the water beneath them.

Nigel pulled back, taking Aiden’s jaw roughly into his hand and turning his head to then ravage his neck.

“Nigel,” Aiden gasped. “I dreamed of this so many times. When you left it was like you took a part of me with you.”

Nigel groaned at the words. He had never dared hope that Aiden might have wanted him too. That it might be the reason that Aiden was always such a little shit to him. There had been no way to act upon any attraction. Not there, not then.

But now?

Nothing could stop them.

With a growl, Nigel moved back, sitting up right and straddling Aiden’s thighs as he began to loosen first his britches and then Aiden’s. They were both panting and moaning when Nigel released both their cocks.

He spat in his palm and then took both in hand, stroking them together.

Aiden instantly went pliant, groaning and writhing.

“I want you. Need to have you.” Nigel grunted. “Like this for now, but later...” Nigel trailed off, not even able to think about taking Aiden later lest he immediately come.

“Yes...” Aiden muttered as he pushed his hips up, pumping against Nigel’s cock and into his hand.

It was nearly all over when Aiden added his own hand, the warm squeeze of it almost sending Nigel over the edge.

Nigel carried on pumping their cocks, the cabin filled with the sound and smell of their love making.

It wasn’t long before both of them spilled, come running over their hands and splattering Aiden’s clothed belly.

Even as they were groaning as they came down from their shared climax, they were kissing again. More gentle this time, tender.

Eventually they broke apart, gasping for breath and both chuckling. Nigel reached for the shelf and grabbed a rag to clean them up a little before he lay down on his side next to Aiden, watching the young man’s features.

Aiden’s smile faded and his expression turned serious as he looked up at the shelves above them.

“It wasn’t just the money. I... I tried to kill him. He used to beat me. He beat my mother until she fell down the stairs and then...” He shook his head. “I knew one day I had to kill him or he would kill me. But I was small, young. I tried. As I took the money and ran I realised he was still breathing. I have always lived with that fear hanging over me.”

Nigel let out a sigh. “Not anymore. You don’t have to be scared anymore.”

Aiden looked at him then, his features brightening a little.

“You still look so handsome,” Aiden said as he reached to cup Nigel’s cheek. “All those years I spent being sullen and bratty around you. I couldn’t let myself close to someone. Not like that.” Aiden took in a shaky breath. “The way Gabrielle and her family took me in, that was as much as I could handle, and even then, every day I expected my father to come or for them to reject me. To love you would have been too much.”

“Fuck,” Nigel muttered, leaning in and kissing Aiden again, hard. He only pulled back when he felt the tears on Aiden’s cheeks.

But Aiden was smiling.

“I can let myself now. If you... Um. Can I stay? At least for a while. I don’t need to go to Istanbul, but I don’t need to go to Bucharest either. Not yet. If you need help, I can, um... learn to sail?”

Nigel huffed a chuckle, studying the earnest and hopeful expression on Aiden's face.

"Yes," Nigel agreed. "I think I'd like you warming my bunk a little longer."

Aiden smiled at that, sighing with relief and running a hand through Nigel's hair.

"Might need to fix the bunk though," Aiden complained, "It's actually very uncomfortable."

"Brat," Nigel huffed before kissing him again.

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